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Ray selected as new Central Hills manager

By William H. Perkins Jr.
Editor

The executive committee of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB) on October 24 selected James O. "Jim" Ray, 44, bivocational pastor of Rehobeth Church, Pelahatchie, as the new manager of Central Hills Retreat near Kosciusko, and approved the restructuring of an MBCB department.

Ray replaces Dan West, who retired August 31 after 21 years at the helm of the state's Royal Ambassador (RA) campground. Ray begins his new duties on November 13.

Ray has previously served Central Hills as assistant manager (1981-83) and as a life-guard and counselor on the 1980 summer staff. He has also served as an instructor for Lad-Crusader Day at Central Hills for the past 13 years, and as a staff member for RA Day at Mississippi College in Clinton for the past nine years.

He has also been camp director at Camp Lakeside (1984-85) near Charleston and day camp director at Camp Hopewell (1985-86) near Oxford.

Ray has served as youth minister at a number of Mississippi Baptist churches, including:

- Calvary Church, Raleigh.
- Ridgecrest Church, Madison.
- Briar Hill Church, Florence.
- First Church, Water Valley.
- Hebron Church, Sardis.
- Anchor Church, Oxford.

He pastored Lucien Church, Brookhaven, immediately prior to accepting his current pastorate at Rehobeth Church, Pelahatchie.

He is bivocationally employed as business services director for Hudspeth Regional Center in Rankin

County. Hudspeth is a state-owned facility specializing in care for the mentally retarded.

Ray was licensed to the Gospel ministry by Grandview Church, Pearl, in 1978, and ordained by Mt. Pisgah Church, Mt. Pisgah, in 1997.

He holds a bachelor of business administration degree from the University of Mississippi in Oxford, and has studied religious education at Baptist-affiliated Mississippi College in Clinton.

In other business, the executive committee approved the restructuring of the MBCB Strategic Initiatives Department and a name change to Strategic Missions Department, effective November 1.

The executive committee selected Ed Deuschle, interfaith consultant in the MBCB Evangelism Department, to head up the newly-restructured department. Current personnel in that department will be assigned appropriate job responsibilities under the new structure.

The executive committee also approved the application of billing credits from the Annuity Board of the Southern Baptist Convention to balance the Expanded Church Annuity Fund (ECAF) through the end of the year.

The ECAF represents the MBCB share of protection insurance and retirement contributions for Mississippi Baptist churches that opt to cover staff members under Annuity Board programs.

The Annuity Board in turn grants billing credits for the protection insurance amount paid by MBCB, and those billing credits, which had been utilized to build the MBCB operating reserve account to 120 days, will be applied to the ECAF through the end of December 2000.

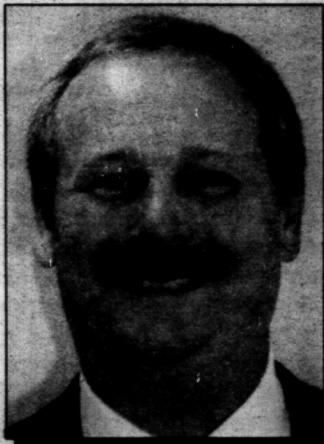
In a related matter, the executive committee approved a

proposal to maintain a 90-day operating reserve and apply funds representing the additional 30 days to the financing of improvements at Central Hills Retreat and Gulfshore Assembly in Pass Christian.

The committee also approved applying the Annuity Board billing credits and unencumbered interest in the amount of not more than

\$250,000 annually, to the amount financed for the improvements, beginning in 2001.

The net effect would be to reduce the financing for those improvements from 20 years to 29 months and save almost \$3.7 million in interest charges, according to Barri A. Shirley, MBCB associate executive director for business services.

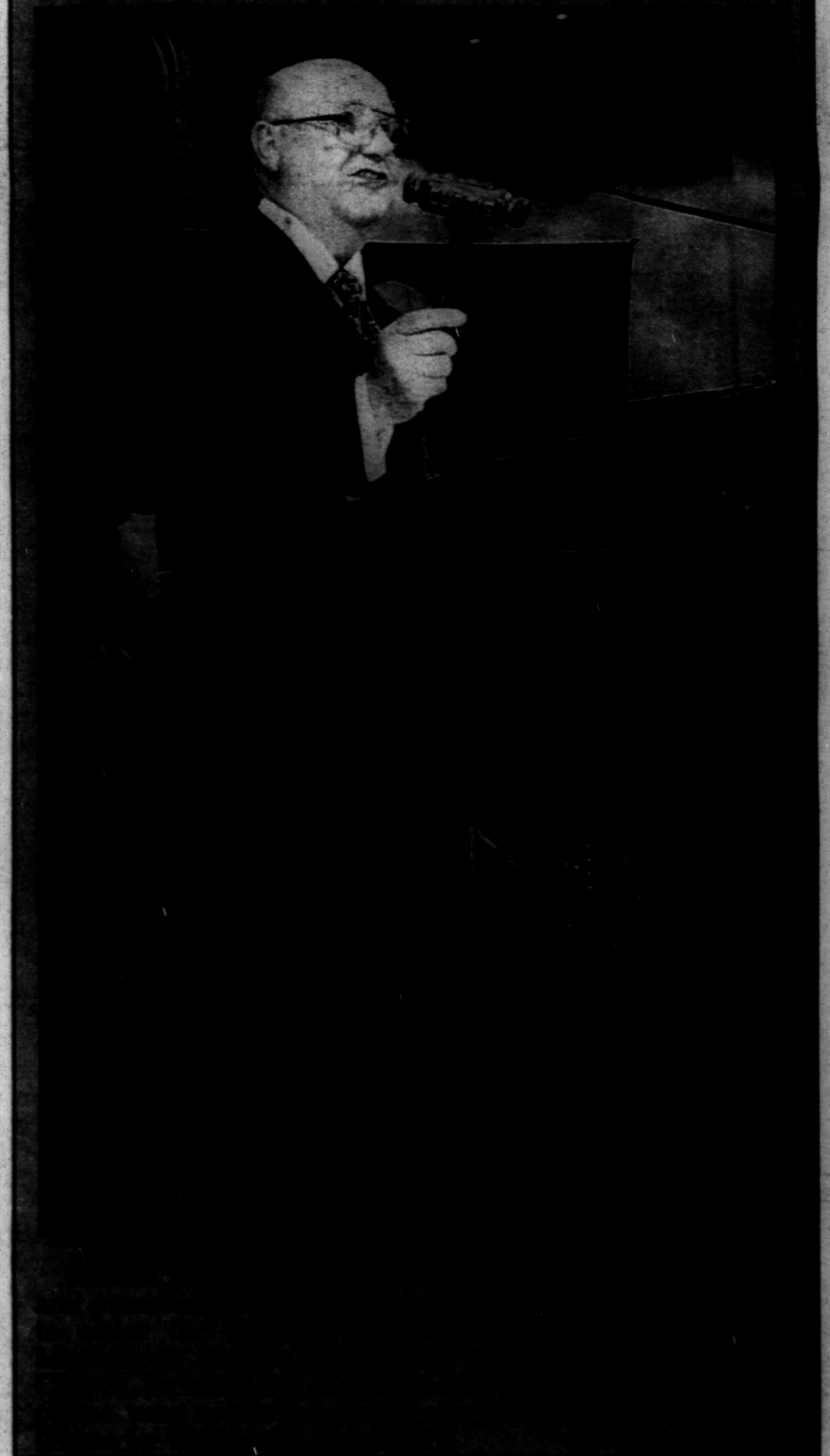


Ray



Deuschle

MBC convenes for 124th annual session



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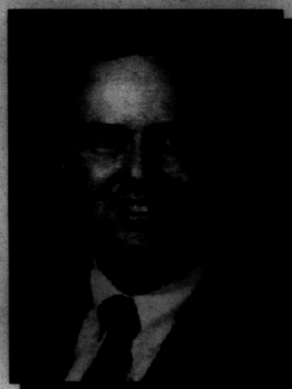
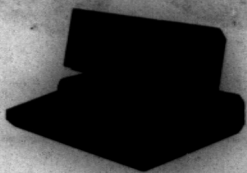
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EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK



**William H.
Perkins Jr.**
Editor

EDITOR
William H. Perkins Jr.

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Postmaster: Send changes of address
to The BAPTIST RECORD, P.O. Box
530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Send
news, communication, and address
changes to The Editor, BAPTIST
RECORD, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS
39205-0530 (601) 968-3800
Fax: (601) 292-3330
E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org

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The picture of harmony and unity

The 165th session of the Mississippi Baptist Convention (MBC) was held October 31-November 1 at First Church, Jackson. (See special section in this week's issue.)

In a good way, it's getting rather monotonous to report that this year's annual meeting — like so many others in prior years — was the picture of unity and harmony.

A record Cooperative Program budget of over \$30,000,000 was adopted for 2001, without a single dissent among the 1,588 registered messengers. Such an action can have only one, unmistakable meaning: Mississippi Baptists clearly intend to go back to their churches and meet the challenge of that record budget.

Count on Mississippi Baptists to meet that record budget while also supporting the all-important missions offerings and other special offerings in a sacrificial manner that is unmatched in the whole of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Count on Mississippi Baptists to meet that record budget and support the offerings while setting new highs for participating in volunteer missions at home and around the world.

Count on them to do all that, and much more. That's just what Mississippi Baptists are. No one focuses on the task left to us by our Savior (Matt. 28:18-20) like we do.

As native son Dizzy Dean once said, "It ain't bragging if you can back it up." With all the glory going to God, Mississippi Baptists have proven over and over again that they can "back it up."

Messengers to the 2000 annual meeting also passed a number of resolutions dealing with religious, cultural, and political issues of concern in the state, nation, and world.

Resolutions are an important way of expressing the will of a specific gathering of people at a specific point in time, i.e. the messengers to the 2000 meeting. Under our system of polity (how we govern ourselves), no Mississippi Baptist church is ecclesiasti-

cally bound to blindly accept any resolution passed by state convention messengers or messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting.

However, it would be difficult to reject the premises behind the 2000 MBC resolutions.

One resolution dealt with the detrimental effects of the entertainment media on American children. A person would be hard-pressed to argue against that idea; the entertainment media is detrimental to adults as well as children.

Another resolution opposed the teaching of gambling-related courses at Mississippi's public institutions of higher learning. This is a real, ongoing danger.

A number of the state's higher education leaders and more than a few legislators are calling for the teaching of such courses. A bill permitting the instruction of gambling courses is expected to be pre-filed for the 2001 session of the Mississippi Legislature, slated to convene in January.

Another resolution pronounced that, while other Southern Baptist groups argue endlessly over the adoption or rejection of multiple versions of the Baptist Faith and Message, Mississippi Baptists will look to the Bible "as our final authority for faith and practice."

Such unity and harmony among Mississippi Baptists is no small matter, and comes at no small price. Many, many people put aside their egos and personal ambitions for the greater task of uniting behind Jesus.

"BROTHER ELMER IS HAVING TROUBLE ADAPTING — THE CONVENTION IS HAVING A SQUABBLE AND HE'S NOT IN THE MIDDLE OF IT!"



Other state conventions are presently at war with themselves or with others. Competing groups vie for political control.

Many states now have one or more Baptist groups fighting against each other for power and position.

A Mississippi native now living in another state recently lamented in an e-mail to this editor, "We haven't yet found a church home, because in this state you never know what you're getting when you walk in a Baptist church."

How sad. The Evil One must certainly be celebrating over such confusion.

Thanks be to our Lord that such is not the case in Mississippi, and may it always — *always* — be so.

GUEST OPINION



Consider the children

By Deborah J. Blair, member
Trinity Church, Southaven

The new class ring sparkled on the hand of the tall, high school junior. Even though he had been at this school only one year, he was looking forward to his senior year.

He loved singing in the varsity choir, playing football, and participating in clubs like the Fellowship of Christian Athletes and Future Business Leaders of America. His hard work in academics had earned him a 97.85 grade point average, and he hoped to graduate at the top of his class.

The young man waited for his ride home and watched as his ninth-grade brother walked over to wait with him. The freshman brother had also excelled in his first year at the new school.

He played the part of Linus in the high school musical, You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown, and was also involved in productions of the local community theater. He played trumpet in the freshman band and couldn't wait to be in the varsity band next year.

The boys were chatting with friends when the familiar green minivan pulled up. The brothers loaded their backpacks in the van and noticed their nine-year-old sister was crying.

Unlike her brothers, Glori had trouble adjusting to her new school. She missed the town from which the family had moved the year before.

"What's wrong, sis?" asked one of her brothers.

"I can't play basketball tonight with my team from church," she whimpered.

"Why not?" the brother pressed.

"Mom says so," she explained.

As the boys questioned their mother, dreams began to melt in the heat of the van. They would no longer be participating in any of their activities at church, and they would be moving away as soon as the school year ended.

There would be no campaign for class office next year. No auditions for summer musicals or Madrigal singers. No more

worshiping at the church they loved. No more youth meetings. For the oldest brother, no graduation with the high school class he had come to love.

What caused this turmoil in the lives of these children? What crime had they committed that would cause these consequences?

They are preacher's kids. The deacons met the night before and asked their father to resign his pastorate. He was instructed not to come back to the church, even to give his resignation, and the lives of his family would never be quite the same.

Sixty-four ministers were forced to resign by Mississippi churches last year, and the numbers are growing. The Mississippi Baptist Convention has trained mediators and conflict resolution ministers who

are ready to help any church facing major conflicts.

Churches can call Louis Smith, director of the church-minister relations department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, for more information about the help that is offered.

The story I have told is about my own family. God has intervened in our lives and is blessing us, but I grieve for other families who, through no fault of their own, may be forced to undergo similar circumstances.

Before your church takes the "easy way out" and dismisses any minister, please consider their children. Make every effort to negotiate, and try to resolve the problems.

Conflicts arise in every church, but let's strive not to treat pastors as expendable.

Their children may become casualties of the war.

The Blair family is currently involved in the Reclaiming Ministry of Trinity Church, Southaven, which ministers to pastors who have been force-terminated.

Louis Smith can be contacted at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3225 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 225. E-mail: lsmith@mbcb.org.

Church planters recruiting 'postmoderns'

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP) — Bardstown Road in Louisville, Ky., is recognized for its peculiar shops, post-modern subculture, and particularly large population of GenXers. The area, known as the Highlands, is a different kind of place, tailor-made for a different kind of church plant.

Southern Seminary's Daniel and Mandy Montgomery have pioneered this area with a new church start begun through Southern Seminary's Church Planting Center and the North American Mission Board's Nehemiah Project.

The church, called Sojourn, seeks to offer refuge to the unreached and forgotten emerging generations who have sought haven in the Highlands.

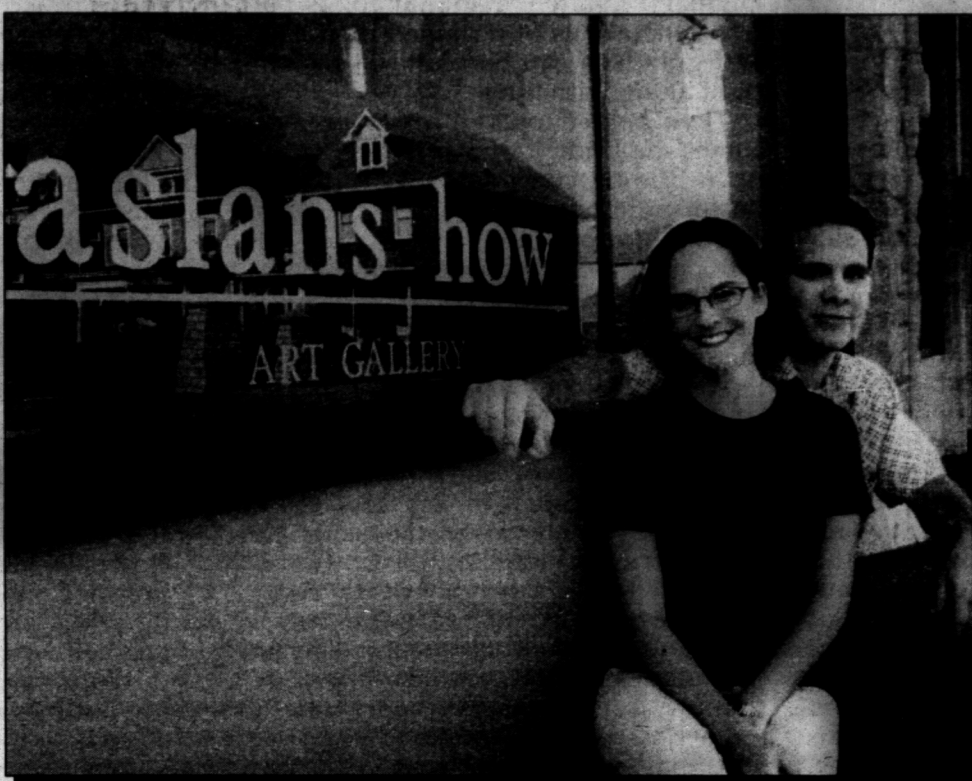
"We're reaching after people with a postmodern mindset," said Daniel, a master of divinity student from Marietta, Ga. "We're reaching after emerging generations. We're reaching after cultural creatives. We're reaching after the homosexual community."

"We're looking at reaching people who normally would never even go into a church."

The Montgomeries began work in the Highlands in January and recently held the initial service at Sojourn in September, drawing more than 130 people — an amazing accomplishment in an area sometimes skeptical of and even hostile to Christianity.

The key to contacting the postmodern populace, said Daniel, is presenting a mission-minded Christian community native to the Highlands.

"What we are trying to do is really build a community in the



PIONEER PLANTERS — Southern Seminary's Daniel and Mandy Montgomery have pioneered the Bardstown Road area of Louisville, Ky., with a new church start begun through the Seminary's Church Planting Center and the North American Mission Board's Nehemiah Project. (BP photo)

Highlands where people are saying, 'How can I reach out to my neighbors?'" he said.

The church started with a core group of 12 people, which also includes Southern students Leslie Groce, Jason Gurnari, and Mark Swann. They gradually built a growing Gospel church through community groups (similar to Bible studies), art evangelism in local parks and a "seeker study" for unbelievers during the week.

"In a given week, there are unbelievers exploring the truth of the Bible and asking all kinds of aggressive questions," Daniel said. "There are believers, of course, exploring the truth of the Bible and experiencing God in a community group."

In total, he described the Highland community as reacting positively to the church plant with both curiosity and interest — especially to the gallery.

"I have more unbelievers that are excited about that than believers," Daniel said.

With attendance leveling out at 70 or 80 people, the church's impact has been immediate. Yet, remarkably the church has yet to be publicized.

Sojourn, though, is not for everyone.

"If you want to serve, then this church is a place for you," Daniel said. "It's not a place for your typical Christian. It's a place for people who want to be disciples."

Indeed, Gospel mission is the focus for Sojourn.

"The biblical term 'sojourn' always implies a destination, a purpose and a place," Daniel said. "You can contrast it with the biblical term 'wandering' which is always in the context of sin. ... Sojourn implies that we are going somewhere. We are not religious vendors of religious goods."

"We are really missiologically driven. Some of the best insights we've gotten is from cross-cultural church planting — starting churches overseas."

To these groups, the planting team will soon add a philosophy study group and film discussion group. The philosophy study will be led by Southern professor of worldview and culture James Parker, who will strive to create a non-threatening environment, open to questioning.

Daniel compares dynamics of the group to the late author and apologist Francis Schaeffer's study center L'Abri — a place where questions could be asked and truth explored.

For Daniel, philosophy, art and beauty all play a large role in "cultural evangelism" — engaging the culture with the Gospel in ways the culture understands.

A major cultural evangelism outlet for the church is through a newly opened art gallery in a Highlands storefront.

"We caught this picture of a place where the arts could be celebrated in a Christian community, in a biblical community," Daniel said of the newly opened gallery, called "aslans how."

Daniel said his training at Southern has been "indispensable in the development" of him as a church planter.

"I would have never been opened up to so much knowledge and also such good foundational stuff," he explained. "Southern has provided the theological foundation for fulfilling the Great Commission."

Vermont parents protest

MONTPELIER, Vt. (BP) — A group of Vermont parents met at the State Capitol in Montpelier last week to protest what they see as promotion of the homosexual agenda in schools by state and local educators, according to CNSNews.com. The protest was sparked in part by an incident at a local school where a student said he was exposed to "homosexual harassment" in the classroom. In a study of genealogy, a teacher said that homosexuality was inherited, putting forward a controversial thesis that has never been proven. When the student questioned the teacher, the teacher asked the student if he was "homophobic" or "had problems with his sexuality," the student said in an affidavit. The teacher is a facilitator with the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN). CNSNews.com reported that family groups also are protesting the distribution of graphic brochures by Outright Vermont, a tax-funded organization that targets "gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and questioning youth." Of particular concern to parents is a pamphlet by Outright Vermont entitled, "Safer Sex Can Be Fun," in which children are encouraged to: "Become a condom expert. Practice with a few different brands, colors, and flavors. Learn to put them on in the dark. Then you'll be ready for safer sex." Protest leader Nancy Sheltra said, "We are also very concerned with stated policies put out by GLSEN that there should be no concerted efforts made to change a homosexual individual from the position they've already taken regarding their lifestyle." A memo originating in the governor's office reported, "The governor feels that this group has demonstrated its effectiveness in this area and warrants the state's support."

Looking back

10 years ago

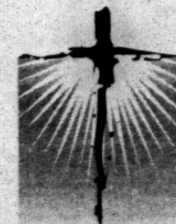
"Every door was an adventure," report John and Ernestine Herrington of Tylertown, who spent the summer canvassing Garden Grove, Fla., for a new church start in the area. The Herringtons were members of a Praxis team sponsored by New Orleans Seminary to assist new churches.

20 years ago

After lengthy debate that spilled over into multiple business sessions, messengers to the 1980 Mississippi Baptist Convention annual meeting vote to merge struggling Clarke College in Newton with Mississippi College in Clinton. Clarke College is the state's only Baptist-affiliated junior college.

50 years ago

Mississippi Baptists will have to tackle several tough issues in their 1950 annual meeting on November 14-16, including the future of the Mississippi Radio Hour, and whether to build Baptist student centers on the state's college campuses.



MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

THE
SECOND
FRONT PAGE

THE BAPTIST
Record

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J.A. Blunt sets standard for life well-lived

By Tony Martin
Associate Editor

What determines a life well-lived? In a culture which honors celebrity — be it found among Hollywood personalities or a nationally-known preacher — it is refreshing to meet those who have been diligent in quietly fulfilling their God-given mission

with little acclamation or fame.

J. A. Blunt lives today in a modest, impeccably neat home just past the schoolhouse in Tishomingo.

The leaves are turning in this part of the state; and the woods around his house are a riot of color. To hear him reminisce about his years in the pastorate is to be enthralled by a great storyteller.

Blunt has just turned 80 years

of age. Fifty-two of those years have been spent in ministering in over 20 churches in Mississippi, with a handful in Georgia, Alabama, and Tennessee for good measure.

These days find him worshipping in

Highland Church, Tishomingo, as part of five generations of ordained men. His son and grandson can be found in the church right along with him.

"I've helped out with prayer meeting some," he said, "but mostly we leave that up to the deacons, since we're without a pastor right now."

Highland Church recognized Blunt October 22 with a special birthday service which included his favorite hymns, a message from Eddie Hamilton, associational missions director of the Metro Association, Jackson, and dinner on the grounds. The church gave him a watch, honoring many years of service.

Blunt is one of eight sons. When he became a Christian at age 28, "the Lord called me to preach at the same time." Hamilton's grandfather, W. C. Hamilton, prayed with him when he was saved.

At the time, only two of his brothers were Christians. "If you'll help me reach my brothers," Blunt said, "I'll surrender to preach."

Blunt served in two part-time pastorates. He felt God wanted him to pastor full-time, so again he prayed: "If you'll work that out, I'll give up anything."

As he recounts, just as he prayed his cigarettes fell out of his shirt pocket. "I took that as a sign," he said, and gave up smoking.

Over the years, Blunt has pastored all over northeast Mississippi. "I've pastored half the churches in Tishomingo County," he said, "and preached in all of them." He even served a while as "associational missionary" in Tishomingo Association. "That was back

in the 50's," he said, "and I taught the first study course in the association. Before that, they wouldn't touch study courses because they considered them 'modernism.'"

"Brother Blunt is one of best preachers I've ever heard," said Eddie Hamilton. "He's a great fellow and has been a good pastor." Hamilton, who was a 15-year-old when Blunt was his pastor, said Blunt was instrumental in guiding him into ministry.

"He's been an inspiration and a mentor," Hamilton said.

Rex Yancey, pastor of First Church, Pascagoula, said he "got to know J. A. back in the seventies, when I was in full-time evangelism." Yancey spoke of Blunt's sense of humor and ability to tell memorable stories.

Blunt said he once baptized 39 people in the Mississippi River while serving at Rosedale Mission (later Trinity Church) in Bolivar County. "I baptized them all at once," he said, "including a woman, her mother, and her daughter. That was a great day."

Blunt said, "I've always tried to share my outlines with young preachers. I wanted to help them in any way that I could."

What advice would he give to young preachers today?

"Preach Jesus Christ and love the people," he answered quickly. "Today people don't even know what love is. They need to know their pastor and their church loves them."

"I'm not a fanatic. I like sports and such, but Christ is number one in my life. The Lord gets all the glory for what he's done," he pointed out.



THE BLOUNTS — J. A. (right) and Johnnie Blunt of Tishomingo recently celebrated his 80th birthday and 52 years of ministry. The Blunts are members of Highland Church, Tishomingo. (Photo by Tony Martin)

"BETTA" BAPTISTS

You see them everywhere! I mean literally everywhere — these Betta fish. You know them — these brightly colored, velvety looking fish that are sometimes called Siamese Fighting Fish.

I do not know who came up with the idea, but they have been marketed across America by putting one beautiful fish in a vase type bowl with a floral "something-or-other" growing out the top!

I have one sitting on my desk that was given to me by a sweet lady here in Mississippi. I have enjoyed it for months. Now, everywhere I go I see these fish in various types of vessels and with different kinds of arrangements.

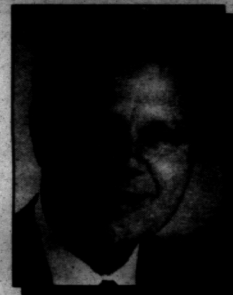
I have seen them in offices, homes, hospitals, hotels, airports, and restaurants. The more I see of them, the more I ask myself, "Why didn't you think of that?" Then I wonder, "Who in the world owns the franchise for these things?"

These beautiful fish are a delight to watch! At times they just float in the water like they are suspended and maybe not even alive. At other times they gently move their fins, almost like a ribbon floating through the water, and smoothly glide around.

There is always just one fish in a bowl, because if you put two of them together they will get into a fight and probably only one will prevail.

Some time ago a friend wanted to show me the fighting capabilities of these fish and how quickly they can get riled up and how fiercely they try to attack.

He had one fish in one bowl,



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

the other fish in another bowl, and then he put the two glass containers close together — not touching, but close.

Immediately the fish in each of the bowls began to flutter, show agitation, and began furiously bumping their heads against the glass. Both fish were in a posture of hostility and both of them were doing a warrior's dance.

They kept this up as long as they were in close proximity to each other, in spite of the fact that there were two sheets of glass and a barrier of oxygen between them. I watched them for a while and thought to myself how these beautiful, yet small, creatures ought to have more sense than to get all worked up over another fish getting near their territory!

As I watched the fish go through their gyrations I thought, "Surely, these must be Baptist fish!" They, like many Baptist saints, have a beauty about them — a wonderful attractiveness. They are a blessing to be around, until...until somebody or something gets near their territory!

Then, almost uncontrollably, their dance begins. Sometimes, like the two fish in different bowls, the situation doesn't even affect them, yet they still get upset.

I remember an incident, years ago, when a man came to see me to give me the news that he was going to drop out of church. I was surprised and asked, "Why? What in the world has happened?"

He began to tell me his story in high pitched, emotional tones. They had changed the materials in what was then called Training Union, and he did not like it!

I knew that he didn't even go to Training Union. In fact — he never had! Nevertheless, he was upset that they had changed the material, so he was going to drop out of church!

Well, I had not changed the materials, nor had anyone in the class. It was simply a different study that was being promoted through Church Training and he did not agree with the change. So, even though it didn't affect the water around him, he was in his "fighting stance."

Now, back to the real Betta fish. Someone shared with me that you could take a mirror, put it up next to the bowl, and the fish will start fighting itself!

Not believing, I tried it. Sure enough, the fish almost went berserk — darting around, banging his head against the glass! The fish was upset with itself!

While fish are not too smart, many of us who know a great deal more probably do the same thing as we get upset about situations that actually are a result of our own decision-making.

It is not hard to see that sometimes we as parents get upset with our children's actions when they are simply reflecting the kinds of things that we do. At times, we may get perturbed with some erratic driver on the highway when actually their driving looks a lot like a video tape of ourselves.

Some time ago I remember walking beside a man as we were leaving a cemetery. He was mumbling under his breath. I asked him what was wrong and he began to tell me.

I knew that he and the man we just buried were not good friends. In fact, they had had some very sharp disagreements. Now, with his adversary dead and buried, this man continued to mumble as he was leaving the cemetery.

He explained to me that he was still mad at the dead guy and the reasons why. I listened as we walked away from the cemetery and thought to myself, "Now that this man is dead and no longer able to fight with you, are you going to go on through life fighting with yourself?" It is really not a very smart thing to do, but it seems to be what we, sometimes "Betta" Baptists, tend to do.

Maybe, if that's the best we can do, we need to find our place, like the fish, and live as peacefully, positively, and productively as we can without disturbing everyone else.

I hope you have a great day in your fish bowl!

Money making church like rest of world

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — The church does not look much different from the rest of the world in managing money, a Southern Baptist stewardship leader believes.

"We are bombarded daily with messages that tell us we deserve it all, we can have it all, we can have it now, and we are worth it," said Gary Aylor, director of church stewardship services at LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Among statistics Aylor cites are of the 50% of marriages that fail, more than half of those fail because of money problems, and a whopping 80% of Americans owe more than they own. In 1999, the average person spent \$1.17 for every \$1 earned. More than 60% of bankruptcies are caused by credit card abuse.

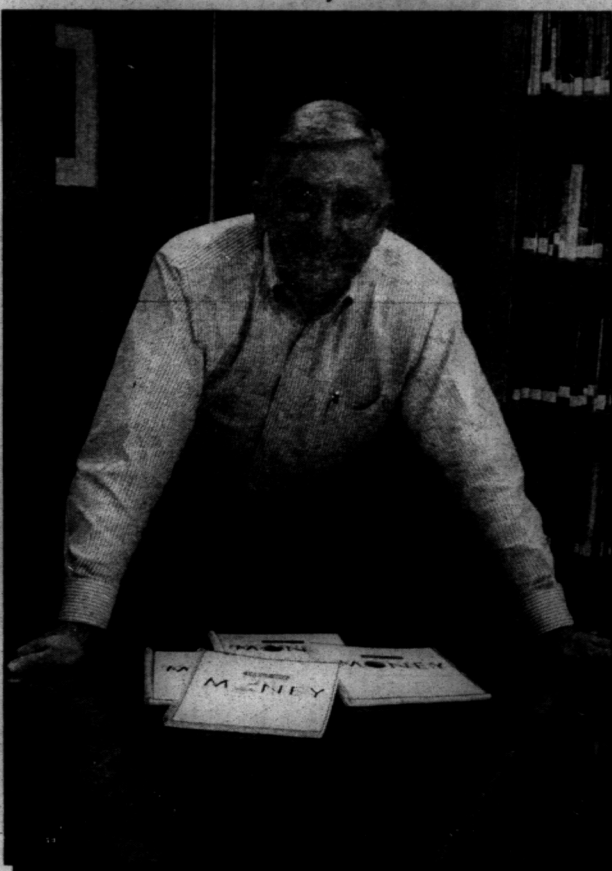
For older Americans, the golden years do not appear bright. Only 2% are financially free, Aylor said. Of the remaining 98%, 23% must continue to work, 45% are dependent on relatives and 30% depend on charity.

Aylor said Baptists, on average, give only 2.3% of their income to church, yet they pay 10.2% of their income in interest on debt. Of adults who attend church at least once a month, as many as 37% give nothing at all to church. Persons age 55 and older give 80% of the money given to churches.

"Some who recognize that God owns their money feel it only applies to the fiftes. They have not understood that stewardship applies to the other 90% too," he observed.

"Most Christians are surprised to learn that no topic, other than love, is more thoroughly covered in Scripture. In fact, two-thirds of the parables deal with stewardship. Jesus knew we were going to have problems dealing with money, so he had a lot to say to us about it."

Focusing on those biblical teachings are three resources on money management, published in October by LifeWay. They are by noted finance author and speaker Larry Burkett with writer Kay Moore.



JESUS ON MONEY— "The church does not look much different from the rest of the world in managing money, Southern Baptist" stewardship leader believes. "We are bombarded daily with messages that tell us we deserve it all, we can have it all, we can have it now and we are worth it," said Gary Aylor, director of church stewardship services at LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention. (BP photo by Morris Abernathy)

Jesus on Money: Book One, Charting A New Course" will help persons determine where they are in relationship to biblical teachings on personal financial management. "Book Two, Making Mid-Course Corrections" deals with adjusting goals and spending plans to accommodate changing needs and situations. "Book Three, Crossing the Finish Line" focuses on yet another life stage, demonstrating how to continue adjusting goals and spending in order to join God in his kingdom agenda of winning the world. A fourth book, a leader guide for the three other volumes, provides steps for using the resources in one's church, training leaders and leading group sessions.

Calling the set of resources "the first of its kind in Baptist life," Aylor said Jesus on Money deals with virtually every money-related topic.

Among subjects addressed are assessing one's finances, borrowing, lending, saving, spending, consumer debt, interest, giving, hoarding, planning for the future, job and career decisions, caring for family, adjusting plans to accommodate change, and leaving a legacy.

The three studies, each for six weeks, offer depth and variety of Scripture for study in small groups. The focus, Aylor said, is on life stage rather than age.

"The first step in determining where a person is with respect to personal financial management is, 'How did I get here?' Persons can assess their money beliefs and their money handling habits, evaluating whether these line up with the Bible.

"When we have a plan, a way to adjust to life changes and goals to honor God with our resources, we find contentment," Aylor said. "Life is about having a plan that matches God's purpose for my life."

Jesus on Money may be obtained by calling LifeWay toll-free at (800) 458-2772.

Tax-funded pamphlet draws protest

WASHINGTON (BP) — A group of Vermont ministers picketed the Burlington offices of Outright Vermont Oct. 12, a tax-funded organization they say promotes a homosexual agenda in local schools, the Internet news site CNSNews.com reported.

Among other items, the church leaders are protesting graphic brochures that target "gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and questioning youth," published by Outright Vermont at taxpayer expense.

Outright Vermont received a grant from the state Department of Health for \$121,575 over three years. "There are 36,835 males and 34,603 females in Vermont between the ages of 14 and 22," the group said. "Outreach's projects are available to youth from middle school (age 14) through college (age 22)."

Outright Vermont is actively promoting homosexual behavior in schools by organizing safer sex parties, youth recruitment and weekend retreats, protesters said. The group also distributes "dental-dams," condoms, lubricants, female condoms, and latex gloves to children as young as 14.

'E-ssentials' video series ready for distribution

ALPHARETTA, Ga. (BP) — When Mike Martindale wanted members of his church to know what their neighbors likely thought about the Bible, Jesus, and church, he used "E-ssentials for the On Mission Church," a new video resource produced by the North American Mission Board (NAMB).

While preparing more than 30 teenagers in his youth group at Bacon Heights Church, Lubbock, Texas, to serve as campus missionaries this fall at 10 different schools, he used the video again. When teaching on cults, Martindale found the video helpful in putting a face on Islam.

"It enhanced what we were trying to say," Martindale said of the premiere issue of "E-ssentials for the On Mission Church," released in October.

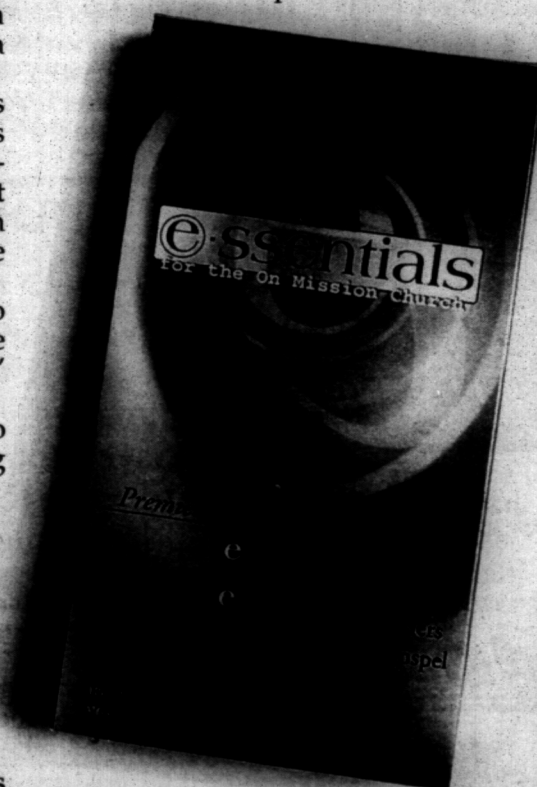
This bimonthly, theme-based video series includes 10 to 15 segments, ranging from 30 seconds to 10 minutes each, featuring intriguing facts or stories designed for use as illustrations, discussion starters or thought provokers that challenge viewers to consider how they can be on mission for Christ.

Doug Keesey, director of NAMB's electronic media team, said E-ssentials for the On Mission Church supports the ministry of the local church.

"E-ssentials will help mobilize churches to be on mission," Keesey said. "This tape is designed to communicate to the entire church their responsibility to put their Christian faith into practice."

The premiere issue of E-ssentials focuses on the depth of "lostness in North America" and "overcoming barriers to sharing the Gospel."

Through this video, viewers are introduced to unchurched people who talk candidly about the church, the Bible and Jesus as part of the "Word on the



Street" segment. Thirty-second "Factoids" provide telling insights of North America's depravity as it relates to homosexuality, pornography and attitudes toward religion.

Another segment in the premiere issue includes a visual description of the spiritual state of North America and a two-

minute address by Robert E. Reccord, president of NAMB, who identifies strategies for reaching those who have never professed faith in Christ.

The video also includes two North American missionary profiles, less than three minutes each, as well as a four-minute segment on Islam, one of the fastest growing religions in the United States, with more than 1 billion adherents worldwide.

Keesey said the video segments are designed for easy incorporation into a worship service or small-group study setting. Each issue is undated and produced so that any segment can be used as a teaching or preaching supplement to increase missions awareness.

Terry Hopkins, minister of missions at First Church, Snellville, Ga., said the E-ssentials video has proven quite effective in his prison ministry as well.

After showing a group of inmates stories about how a Las Vegas homemaker, a wealthy Boston publisher and an alcoholic found freedom in Jesus, more than 30 inmates committed their lives to Christ.

In addition to the video series, NAMB offers several free resources ready for downloading from its Internet site, including PowerPoint files and complete sermons and sermon outlines related to the video topics.

Other web resources include sample video clips from the current issue, a video user's guide and testimonials from those who have used the video in their ministries.

Visit the NAMB website at www.namb.net/essentials to access these materials and request a free introductory copy of E-ssentials.



Trinity Church, Shady Grove, Laurel, held a ground breaking dedication on Sept. 10. Complete renovation of the present sanctuary into education space and a fellowship hall is planned in addition to a new sanctuary with a seating capacity of 500. Among those present were A. Harrison Weger, former pastor; Allan Nix, director, Jones Association; and Ron Swindall, interim pastor.



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1. Lord, I admit that I need you.
(*I have sinned.*)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death.
(*I repent.*)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you.
(*I believe in Jesus.*)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with him.
(*I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.*)

But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name (John 1:12).

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

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GAs of Priceville Church, Tupelo

GAs of Priceville Church, Tupelo, held a Christmas in August party to collect items for their adopted missionary. Pictured (front row, from left) are Alaina Gamble; Chelsea Webb; Anna Morgan; Kristen Patton; Lauren Patton; and Katlin Nolan; (back row) Lauren Hardin; Jennifer Carroll; and Nikki Stults.

A joint Thanksgiving service will be performed by the choirs of Bayou View Church, Gulfport; Trinity United Methodist; and Westminster Presbyterian at Bayou View Church on Nov. 19 at 6 p.m. For more information, call Bayou View Church at (228) 863-2482.



Recognition services were held recently for GAs of Lorena Church, Smith Association. Pictured (from left) are Sharon Taylor, leader; Carrie Harrison; Nicole Faulkner; Emily Forfer; Helen Faulkner; Stacy Henderson; and Shana Bishop.

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First Church, Oxford, recently honored its deacon emeriti. Pictured are (from left) Richard "Dick" Elliott; Russell Aven; B. B. Bowen; Tom Atwood, pastor; J. C. Goolsby; and John M. Alexander, chairman of deacons. Not pictured are Laban Cost, W. C. Hill, Robert Ed Jones, and Floyd Metts.

Coila Church, Carroll

Association, will sponsor a singing featuring PROMISED on Nov. 11 at 7:30 p.m. A fundraising supper for the baptistery will be served from 5-7 p.m. For more information call (662) 237-6178 or 237-4248.

The Judgment will be presented at Border Springs Church, Caledonia, Nov. 8-10 at 7 p.m. Glen Edmonds is pastor.



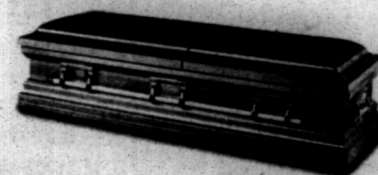
Members of First Church, Oxford



Mt. Zion Church, Waynesboro, recently honored Irna Raye Gilbert for 60 years of teaching children. She began teaching at Mt. Zion Church in 1940. Gilbert was presented a plaque engraved with the poem "A Loving Teacher." Gilbert (center) is pictured with many of her former students.

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